



--SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--;

line 11, cancel "said".

Page 3, line 8, cancel "said";

line 18, cancel "said";

line 25, cancel "said";

line 37, cancel "said".

Page 4, line 18, cancel "said".

Page 8, line 3, change "said Sepigel." to

--Sepigel™.---

Page 9, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following heading:

--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 1-20.

Cancel claim 22.

Cancel claim 23.

Cancel claim 24.

Add the following new claims:

--25. Composition comprising an oil phase, an aqueous phase, at least one water-in-oil emulsifier, at least one oil-in-water emulsifier, wherein the composition is an inverted latex comprising from 20% to 60% by weight of a branched or crosslinked anionic polyelectrolyte from at least one monomer possessing a strongly acidic function, copolymer-

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ized either with at least one monomer possessing a weakly acidic function or with at least one neutral monomer; the strongly acidic function of the monomer containing it being a sulfonic acid function or a phosphonic acid function, partially or totally salified and the monomer being 2-methyl-2-[(1-oxo-2-propenyl)amino]-1-propanesulfonic acid partially or totally salified in the form of an alkali metal salt or in the form of ammonium salt; the weakly acidic function of the monomer containing it being a carboxylic acid function, and the monomer being selected from the group consisting of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid and maleic acid, partially or totally salified; and the neutral monomer being selected from the group consisting of 2-hydroxyethyl acrylate, 2,3-dihydroxypropyl acrylate, 2-hydroxyethyl methacrylate and 2,3-dihydroxypropyl methacrylate, and an ethoxylated derivative, with a molecular weight between 400 and 1000, of each of these esters.

2-26. The composition according to claim 25, comprising from 25 to 45% by weight of the branched or crosslinked anionic polyelectrolyte.

3-27. The composition according to claim 25, wherein the anionic polyelectrolyte is the result of a copolymerization of its precursor monomers, which is carried out at a pH less than 4.

4 ~~50%~~ ^{50%} ~~28~~. The composition according to claim ~~25~~¹, wherein ~~30%~~ to 90% of the monomer units which comprise the anionic polyelectrolyte have a strongly acidic function.

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5 ~~28~~. The composition according to claim ~~25~~¹, wherein the branched or crosslinked anionic polyelectrolyte is formed from partially or totally salified 2-methyl-2-[(1-oxo-2-propenyl)amino]-1-propanesulfonic acid, copolymerized with 2-hydroxyethyl acrylate.

6 ~~30~~ ⁵. The composition according to claim ~~28~~⁵, wherein 30 to 90% in molar proportions of the monomer units comprised by the anionic polyelectrolyte is 2-methyl-2-[(1-oxo-2-propenyl)amino]-1-propanesulfonic acid partially or totally salified in the form of an alkali metal salt or an ammonium salt, and the anionic polyelectrolyte includes, in molar proportions, from 60% to 90% of 'sodium or of ammonium salt of 2-methyl-2-[(1-oxo-2-propenyl)amino]-1-propanesulfonic acid and from 10% to 40% of 2-hydroxyethyl acrylate.

7 ~~31~~ ¹. The composition according to claim ~~25~~¹, wherein the inverted latex comprises from 30% to 45% by weight, of a branched or crosslinked, anionic polyelectrolyte based on a 2-methyl-2-[(1-oxo-2-propenyl)amino]-1-propanesulfonic acid which is partially or totally salified in the form of a sodium salt or of the ammonium salt copolymerized with acrylic acid, partially salified in the form of the sodium salt or of the ammonium salt.

--32. The composition according to claim 25, wherein the anionic polyelectrolyte is crosslinked and/or branched with a diethylenic or polyethylenic compound in a molar proportion, expressed relative to the monomers used, of from 0.005% to 1%.

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~~8~~ --33. The composition according to claim ~~32~~¹¹₂₅, wherein the molar proportion ranges from 0.01% to 0.2%.

~~9~~ --34. The composition according to claim ~~32~~¹¹₂₅, wherein the crosslinking agent and/or the branching agent is selected from the group consisting of ethylene glycol diacrylate, sodium diallyloxyacetate, ethylene glycol diacrylate, diallylurea, trimethylolpropane triacrylate, and methylenebisacrylamide.

~~10~~ --35. The composition according to claim ~~25~~¹¹₂₅, further comprising from 2.5% to 15% by weight of emulsifiers.

~~11~~ --36. The composition according to claim ~~35~~¹⁰₃₅, comprising from 4% to 9% by weight of emulsifiers.

~~12~~ --37. The composition according to claim ~~36~~¹⁰₃₆, wherein from 20% to 50% of the total weight of the emulsifiers present are water-in-oil emulsifiers, and from 80% to 50% of the total weight of the emulsifiers are oil-in-water emulsifiers.

~~13~~ --38. The composition according to claim ~~37~~¹¹₃₇, wherein from 25% to 40% of the total weight of the emulsifiers

present are water-in-oil emulsifiers and from 75% to 60% of the total weight of the emulsifiers are oil-in-water emulsifiers.

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114 ~~--39.~~ The composition according to claim ~~28~~¹, wherein the oil phase represents from 15% to 40% of its total weight.

115 ~~--40.~~ The composition according to claim ~~30~~¹⁴, wherein the oil phase represents from 20% to 25% of its total weight.

116 ~~--41.~~ The composition according to claim ~~31~~¹⁴, wherein the oil phase is made up of isohexadecane or white mineral oil.

117 ~~--42.~~ The composition according to claim ~~32~~¹, further comprising one or more additives selected from the group consisting of complexing agents, transfer agents ^{and} ~~or~~ chain-limiting agents.

118 ~~--43.~~ Process for preparing a composition comprising an oil phase, an aqueous phase, at least one water-in-oil emulsifier, at least one oil-in-water emulsifier, wherein the composition is an inverted latex comprising from 20% to 60% by weight of a branched or crosslinked anionic polyelectrolyte formed from at least one monomer possessing a strongly acidic function, copolymerized either with at least one monomer

possessing a weakly acid function or with at least one neutral monomer, the process comprising:

8 a) emulsifying an aqueous solution containing the monomers and ~~the optional~~ additives in an oil phase in the presence of one or more water-in-oil emulsifiers;

b) initiating a polymerization reaction by introducing a free-radical initiator into the emulsion formed in a), and thereafter allowing the reaction to proceed to obtain a reaction medium; and

c) when the polymerization reaction is complete, introducing one or more oil-in-water emulsifiers at a temperature below 50°C.

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--44. The process according to claim 43, further comprising concentrating the reaction medium obtained after step b) by distillation before step c) is carried out.

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--45. The process according to claim 43, wherein the polymerization reaction is initiated by a redox couple at a temperature below or equal to 10°C, and is then carried out in a virtually adiabatic manner to a temperature greater than or equal to 40°C.

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--46. The process according to claim 43, wherein the starting aqueous solution is adjusted to a pH less than or equal to 4 before step c) is carried out.